

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**May 27, 2008**

**A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on May 27, 2008 pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.**

**Board members present were Chairman Dale Venturini, Commissioners, David A. Duffy, Jason Fowler and Paul MacDonald.**

**Also in attendance were Kerrie Bennett, RICCA; Martha Sheridan and Neil Schriever, PWCVB; Tim Muldoon, Debbie Tuton, Arlene Oliva and Amanda Marzullo RICC; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Schadone, Kym Chevian and Eleanor SanAntonio, Dunkin' Donuts Center; Dave DePetrillo and Mark Brodner, RIEDC; Evan Smith, Newport CVB; Luther Beckett, a reporter for Tour Guide; Jessica Cigna, Senate Fiscal, and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.**

**Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:35 pm.**

**Ms. Venturini asked for approval of the minutes of the April meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duffy and seconded by Mr. MacDonald it was unanimously**

**VOTED: to approve the minutes of the April meeting.**

**Ms. Venturini announced that the next meeting would be held on June 24th at 12:30 p.m. Ms. Venturini reminded the marketing personnel from the Complex and the CVB that presentations of their annual marketing plans would be at the August Marketing Committee meeting.**

### **DUNKIN' DOUNTS CENTER**

**Ms. Schadone introduced Luther Beckett, a reported for Tour Guide, who was interested in sitting in on our meeting because of the unique working relationship that we have within the facilities and with the PWCVB, Newport CVB and the Rhode Island Tourism Division. Ms. Schadone reported on a new marketing initiative, Ticketmaster's Affiliate Program. Ms. Schadone began a tutorial of the program and how it could benefit the Dunkin' Donuts Center. (See attached Power Point presentation). Discussions ensued on the affiliate program and Ms. Schadone stated that there will be new selling opportunities via links on affiliate websites. Ms. Schadone said that affiliates will earn a commission based on the net tickets sold through their web site link. Ms. Schadone stated that the program will continue to grow.**

### **CONVENTION CENTER**

Mr. McGinn's presentation began with an organization chart of the Convention Center's sales team. Mr. McGinn noted that he is the Director of Sales and primary contact for Public Shows and explained that each member of the team specializes in a different market segment, Small Meetings, Tradeshows and Conventions, Corporate Meetings and Seminars. Mr. McGinn stated that Kathy Masino is the Director of Food and Beverage and has additional senior personnel responsible for Weddings/Socials, Conventions and Public Shows and Corporate Meetings and Tradeshows. Mr. Duffy asked if the Convention Center had enough sales people to promote food events. Mr. McGinn said that another person is now there selling the venue for social events. Mr. McGinn stated that the team strategy is to concentrate on key account penetration, new lead sources and networking opportunities. Mr. McGinn said that our relationship with the hotels is very important. Mr. McGinn noted several Westin referrals because no additional meeting space was added when the additional room tower was constructed. Mr. McGinn stated that the social market is a challenge although sales calls and mailings are sent to area high schools and university prospects. Mr. Muldoon noted that there are date issues because we do not like to commit the space to a stand alone event if there is an opportunity to host a tradeshow that will occupy more of the building. Ms. Venturini asked if there was a report that shows year over year comparisons of dark days. Mr. Muldoon answered that during the budget process that information is reviewed. Ms. Venturini requested that report be made part of the marketing plan.

## **PROVIDENCE/WARWICK CVB**

**Mr. Schriever gave a brief explanation of CVB lingo. Mr. Schriever stated that the process begins with a lead followed by the submission of a bid. After a bid has been submitted the event is considered tentative and waiting for a decision by the event planner. A meeting or event is not definite until a contract has been signed. Mr. MacDonald asked what is meant by peak room nights. Mr. Schriever responded that peak room night refers to the night that most attendees are registered. Mr. Duffy said that he would like the reports to give us a better idea of where we stand and how we are doing. Ms. Venturini noted that we need more information at the committee meetings. Mr. MacDonald said that he wants to know the bottom line. Ms. Sheridan stated that Mr. Schriever has all the information and prepares those reports and will respond to the committee's concerns at a future meeting. Mr. Duffy asked if the 2010 NCAA tournament was listed as a definite. Mr. Schriever stated that we have a commitment so yes, but the contract has not been signed. Mr. Schriever presented a list of the reasons for lost business.**

**Dates not available**

**Hotel room rates**

**Convention Center rates**

**Transportation/access issues**

**Board preference/internal politics**

**Not enough breakouts/Meeting too large**

**Destination image**

**Rooms to space ratio**

**Client concessions could not be met**

He noted that the Providence room rates are \$35 to \$40 higher than Hartford. Mr. MacDonald said that it is unfair to compare us to Hartford because they are giving their rooms away. Mr. Schriever stated that our customers are considering Hartford over Providence because of rate. Mr. Fowler asked if the list were in any particular order and if it would make sense to target two or three reasons from the list for action. Ms. Sheridan said that the CVB does that every day. Mr. McCarvill noted that we all work on the image of the destination every day. He said that the room rates should get better but that would mean that demand is down. Mr. McCarvill stated that every destination is dealing with the same problems to one degree or another. Mr. Duffy asked if this committee needs to know about non-convention business. Mr. Fowler said that it is important for us to know what is in the State. Mr. Schriever continued his presentation with a marketing and communications update.

**DAVID C. DEPETRILLO – RHODE ISLAND TOURISM DIVISION**

Mr. DePetrillo brought with him the advertisements that have been created for the State Tourism Division. Mr. DePetrillo and Mr.

**Broduer presented advertising videos that are being shown in other television markets. Mr. DePetrillo reported that the new tourism web site would be up and running in two weeks. He said that the new site will allow visitors to share their videos to prospective tourists. Mr. DePetrillo stated that because of energy prices we need to encourage people in neighboring states to vacation closer to home.**

#### **EVAN SMITH – NEWPORT CVB**

**Mr. Smith reported that ticket sales for the Newport Mansions were up 5%. Mr. Smith said that he expects gas prices to impact tourism in future months but so far the city remains busy.**

**Ms. Venturini thanked everyone for attending. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duffy and seconded by Mr. Fowler it was unanimously**

**VOTED: to adjourn at 2:00 pm**